"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

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THE REALITY OF FEELING

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COMING EVENTS

VEDANTA CENTRE, 420 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.
Services: Sun. 11 A.M. and 8 P.M.
Gayatri Devi in charge
Class: Tues. 8 P.M.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA, La Crescenta, California
Services: Sun. 11 A.M. and 3:15 P.M.
Sister Daya in charge
Class: Thurs. 8. P.M.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with regret we announce the change in price of the subscription of THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST. Due to the increasing cost of publication, it has become imperative. Beginning with this issue, the yearly subscription will be $3.00 and single copies 75c. Those who have already sent in their subscription for 1949, kindly mail the balance to The Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon Street, Boston 15, Massachusetts, or to the Ananda Ashrama, Box 577, LaCrescenta, California.

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOL. XXXVIII 1949 NUMBER 2

TRUTH SHALL DELIVER

By Geoffrey Chaucer

(Done into modern English by Marion Farquhar for a chorus of men's voices by William Schuman. Copyright 1948 by G. Schirmer, Inc.)

Flee from the crowd and dwell in steadfastness,
Suffice unto thy role though it be small.
To hord brings hate and climbing, slipperiness,
Rank invites envy and riches dazzle all.
Savour no more than is thy due withal;
Take the advice thou hast for others spread,
And Truth shall deliver, there is no dread.

Attempt not all things crooked to redress,
But trust in Fortune, turning as a ball;
Great rest is far from busybodiness;
Beware a kick against the cobbler's awl;
Strive not as doth the crock against the wall.
If thou wilt lead, let self be conqueréd,
And Truth shall deliver, there is no dread.

That which is sent receive in lustiness;
The wrestling for this world asketh a fall.
Here is no home, here is but wilderness:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beast, out of thy stall!
Know thine own land, look up, thank God for all;
Hold the high—way and by thy ghost be led,
And Truth shall deliver, there is no dread.

seems at first like something far off from us and unnatural, but it can become part of our own nature. To bring it close to us in this way is the object of the devotional element.

Devotion is not a theory. In fact we have to exhaust and transcend all theoretical study and speculation before we are ready for the devotional path. A devotee does not want to read about the Divine things; he wants to taste them; he wants to experience them. He is not satisfied merely to hear about the water of life; he wants to partake of it. His interest lies in the practical issue.

Devotion springs from the deeper feelings of the heart. We all possess it, even those who have not cultivated it. The fact that we do not cultivate it does not mean that we do not have it. There are certain occasions which awaken these feelings within us. But even after they are awakened, we ourselves need to follow them up, otherwise they go to sleep again, or are covered over. A corner of your room, which you fail to clean, after a time shows an accumulation of dust. The same way it is with our heart. There are certain delicate and subtle feelings which need our constant watchfulness, and this watchfulness provides a wonderful discipline for us in our life.

How careful we are to follow a certain physical routine, to form systematic daily habits. People who are normal never neglect these, because they know that such things are essential to health and well-being. They believe in them, and they carry them out. Similarly spiritually-minded people maintain regularity in their spiritual habits. They believe in prayer just as much as men of the world believe in food. They believe in higher thoughts, not because of what these may bring to them in the way of success or gain, but because they know that until their actions are founded on thoughts that are lofty and noble they will not be productive. You see when

we feel for spiritual things what we now feel for material things, it simplifies our living and takes away our mental strain.

That is why I am telling you that the devotional life begins when you have gone beyond theoretical religion. Study of books and scriptures, and all such things, have a certain value, but a real aspirant wants to experience Truth at first hand; so he strives for that, and this inward striving is what may be called real devotion. It awakens; it reveals, and it gives us immediate knowledge in regard to the Unseen.

There is no absolute rule in relation to all this. One man may find great upliftment by entering a place of worship, another may prefer to pray out of doors; this one may find his highest expression through kneeling, that one, by sitting. It is not in the least a question of form, but wholly a question of feeling. There are things which may give us a certain amount of stimulation. Environment often inspires us, but that is not of supreme importance; it is a secondary consideration.

Only on one point do all religions strike a similar note—that is in regard to the life of devotion. We have to feel; we have to love; we have to *become,* in order to partake of the blessedness of the Absolute Being. We all must cultivate purity, we must keep our heart cleansed by preventing dirt and impurity from falling upon it, and we must, to the extent of our power, polish it until it acts like a mirror and reflects the Divine. If we allow it to become unclean, if we regard it carelessly, then it does not catch the Image of the Ideal.

The great statement of Christ: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," shall attain the Kingdom of Heaven—is still valid. Why? Because that purity is essential to the spiritual life. Now in order to make our heart pure it must become single. The real definition of purity is

an unmixed condition. If our thought is single, if our purpose is one, and if our mind rests in unity instead of being scattered and dissipated, then it is pure. It becomes impure when it is mixed; it loses its power. Purity always indicates that we have brought ourselves to a state of oneness with our higher Being.

Even in our physical life we learn the value of purity, of keeping things in unity by making our life homogeneous. Inharmony always brings impurity. Two colors that are alien do not blend. Two things contrary to each other never fail to bring a jarring note. So in our thought, in our action, in our life in general, we should cultivate purity by bringing about an unmixed condition, where everything blends, becomes one.

There is one underlying Principle. If we discover that Principle, then in our thoughts, in our actions, in everything, even in the material world, we shall see It permeating all. People who are materialistic perceive only diversity. They do not see the One in the many, and that is the reason why there is conflict, rashness of judgment, inharmony, quarreling, because their vision is solely from the surface. It is as our vision deepens that we begin to see our connection with that infinite One. We behold that One within us and without us and life becomes full of harmony, full of purity; for when we touch that pure One we become pure. The physical being always becomes purified when it touches the spiritual. That is the law. We attain the highest standard of purity when we find ourselves connected with that One. The sun shines and gives its radiance to the impure objects, as well as to the pure, but it never becomes polluted; the fire can consume everything, even the most unclean things, yet it remains uncontaminated. So with us. When our life becomes part of that infinite Life, like the fire, it burns all impurities

to ashes, destroys all bondage, but is itself unburned and indestructible.

Those who have been willing to work for this, who have spent their energy and love upon the task, and have devoted themselves even to the extent of sacrificing their very lives—they are the ones who find the treasure. Yet there is no sacrifice. We never get anywhere if we do these things with a sense of sacrifice. We must *love* the Ideal. The spiritual Principle must become living, so living and so real that it will not require any imagination on our parts in order to give our heart's love and worship to It.

Wherever and whenever we find the smallest manifestation of this Divinity in our life, we should follow it up; for if we can hold to that little bit, cultivate it, understand it, it will act like a connecting link which ultimately will unite us with our Divine Origin.

Every man must find this point of contact according to his own mental conception. A spiritual Ideal that may seem beautiful, lofty, perfect to you may have no meaning for another. It is something that we must evolve and unfold within our own souls, and that is the reason why it is needful for us to reflect, study, struggle to know these things directly, because we cannot take another's word for it. No matter how reliable the source of information may be, we never have that strength of conviction which should be ours until we have had first hand experience. It is through the reality of feeling that we shall ultimately gain that experience and acquire that knowledge which will free us from all imperfection and all bondage.

However gigantic a man's intellect may be, no one can wholly comprehend these things by calculation; we can only see the possibilities in them and perceive their outline. We may derive help from the study of books and from various

sources that will serve to stimulate our inward feeling, and that, of course, will tend to make our spiritual life ever more and more real. But it is only when we are able to awaken the finer side of our nature through meditation and inward feeling, that we shall find the vivid, the living reality of spiritual existence. Therefore we must try to cultivate that feeling, quite silently and without ostentation. Ostentation does not give us the spirit of religion. It is not through the bigness of the cathedral or church or temple that we are brought close to the spirit of God, but through the soul that manifests that spirit. When we can feel that Divine Presence within us and can express It in our lives, then It becomes inseparable from us, so that no matter where we go or into what conditions we may be thrown, we carry in our hearts a holy shrine.

Let us, in this hour of silence, turn our thoughts and aspirations to the Supreme Being of the universe,

That we may feel the Divine Spirit within us and all about us and have access to that Spirit!

O Thou Eternal One! fill us with Thy Infinite Self! that we may lose all sense of finiteness and limitation;

That our hearts may become more open to finer and nobler things;

And that our love may become more inclusive and unselfish.

O Thou compassionate and all-loving Deity!

Remove from our hearts all impurity and the blemish of self-love.

Thou art the Giver of all strength and inspiration!

Strengthen us with Thy divine protection, that we may follow Thy path with unwavering faith and undaunted courage.

All things are possible unto Thee:

Through Thy grace even the lame can cross the mountain and the dumb become eloquent.

Thou art the Giver of all strength and illumination, of all happiness and peace.

Grant unto us Thy loving protection,

And keep us ever in Thy peace!

Peace, peace, peace be unto us, and to all living beings!

II.

Today, if I am given the power, I should like to convey to you something that is in my heart; although often when we most desire to express, we find that we do not have the language to do so.

What I wish to say is this: that I feel more and more convinced that the only thing that counts in life is strength of character. What makes character? Character is never an imitation. It is something fundamental, requiring selflessness and great conviction. The man of character does things not because others are asking him or driving him to do them, or because he wants to appear great or pleasing to others; not for that reason, but for the sake of the things themselves.

Take cleanliness, for instance. We do not make ourselves clean merely because we are going to appear before a company of people. Cleanliness, in the real sense, is achieved when we, out of our own desire, keep this body—which is the temple of God—as a fitting place for Him. The food we eat, the drink we drink, the attire we wear, the thoughts we think, all these we should imbue with that same spirit, for that is the way we really build our character on a true foundation.

We are living here in a place made sacred by the thoughts and feelings we have poured into it. This afternoon when I was walking around the grounds seeing the beauty of the Ashrama, feeling its sanctity, I said, quite spontaneously,

that I felt the blessing of God upon it. I spoke this way because I could not help repeating what was moving so strongly in my heart. The words came like an overflow. If we can all feel this, then our hardships, trials, difficult moments, dark clouds that gather about us, doubts that come upon us, faint-heartedness that almost thwarts our purpose, all would vanish.

Blessing of God is like a ray of sunlight that comes upon us from the Unseen, and how beautiful it is! Do not think for a moment that it is merely our enthusiasm that gives this reality. We must always, first and last, believe that the Hand of God guides our steps. It is His mind which gives us power to think; it is His heart that makes us full of feeling. Until we can sense this, life is very barren.

There are plenty of people who have riches; perhaps they have intellectual gifts, name and fame; but these mean very little unless we learn to feel for others before we talk big things.

Inevitably we must learn to love all mankind as our brethren, but we must first learn to establish that love in the smaller circles in which we live, in relation to the people whom we immediately contact. When we see anyone who is bent down with weight, we must try to relieve him through our thoughts, our prayers, and our actual service.

I do not want just to preach a sermon tonight—nothing like that—only I feel very full—full of tenderness. Also I feel that the great men, the Saviours of men, the prophets, the saints, that their strength is the strength of selflessness. They do not think of themselves. The same would be true for all of us. When it comes to our strength we can do nothing and less than nothing when we think only of ourselves and depend solely on our own power; but our hands and feet, mind and brain can become definite sources for con-

structive work if we follow in the footsteps of these great things.

Look at Gandhi. You cannot say of him that he believed in the great Principle which he followed only while things seemed to succeed. Such measure of success is not in the minds of the spiritually exalted. The measure of success for great men and true characters lies always in the Hand of God. That Hand never fails, and let us not forget in our moments of despondency and misgiving that we also are guided by that same Hand.

We must not be impatient; we cannot force an issue—we cannot move even a single drop of water unless He helps us to do so. Always believe in the One who has placed you here, and also believe in yourself in relation to that One, that as you are related to that infinite Power, there is nothing impossible for you to do. This does not mean that you should have any aggressive form of faith; the real form of faith brings strength, but also it brings mellowness. We hurt no one and we help every one who comes near us.

Let us make this place a real paradise, full of healing, so that when people come within our radius they may feel our lovingness, our warmth and the aspirations we have in our hearts. May everything become vibrant with this atmosphere, for that is the way we create our paradise. We live happily indeed even among those who are not happy. We live happily indeed among those who doubt and are despondent. Let us always try to be saturated with thoughts like these to which Lord Buddha once gave potent expression. That will be possible only when we have established our own character in God, when we have become strong in His strength.

Never fail to keep up the standard of this place. It is a very wonderful thing to be connected with something that

is great and lofty. We ourselves may not always be strong enough to live up to such a high ideal, but when we feel that someone has trusted us, someone has blessed us, it helps us very much in our moments of despondency, darkness and misgiving; it inspires us to go on. It has always given me solace to think of the great souls who have given me their blessing. Sometimes I have doubted by own strength, but I know that they have not made any mistake (God never makes mistakes), and as we look up to them we find that we are not mistaken and it gives us new strength and courage.

Think in these terms and bear with one another—more than that, if you can, love one another. When we are bound by love the question of bearing with one another never enters. Then it is all healing, all inspiration, a definite factor, a practical lesson in our lives.

I am going to trust you all more and more. If I have in the past placed my faith in you, I place even greater faith now, because I know what you are capable of doing through your love, through your devotion, and through your spirit of service. This work would not be here if you had not also had your part in it.

Never, never look back. Never be creatures of doubt, but be full of faith and inspire others also with faith, courage and enthusiasm. The greatest amount of enthusiasm comes to us—an enthusiasm which nothing can hinder, not even old age, disease and death—when we know that God pervades, and is undying. Let us never forget that.

Too often we want to analyze; but we cannot have any measuring-cup great enough to encompass that Infinite. Therefore let us partake of that consciousness, as much or as little as we are capable of doing, for that will give us contact with the Source of things and with our fellow beings.

Help every one. Surely if you saw someone coming up

the hill, staggering under a heavy load, there is no one of you who would not stop and try to give him a lift; same way when your brother or sister comes staggering beneath a load of misguided zeal, help that one always with love. There is no other way.

Speak no harsh words to anyone. Why, it wounds me every time I have to use a seemingly harsh tone. Sometimes I suffer for days, even though it may seem that the person was benefited that way. There are better ways. Altogether banish harsh feelings from your heart and mind. Fill the whole atmosphere with gentleness. Remember the name of this place—Ananda—the bliss of God—that you may yourself radiate that bliss, that you may feel the joy of God within you, that every one of you may learn to sing (for every soul can sing) like the birds that sing at early dawn. Feel always happy that God has given you this privilege to serve. All ills are overcome through God's Light. If we can turn our thoughts within, in silence, in prayer, in meditation, all will become well with us, and we shall give our share toward making this place like the ideal for which it stands—beautiful, sublime, and full of pure spiritual inspiration.

Be resolved every one of you, each in his own way, that you will be full of consideration for others, full of patience with them and with yourself, and full of gentleness in your speech, your thought, and your act. By this I do not mean, nor do I believe, that you should make loud vows that you are going to do this or that, but be resolved in your own heart.

These thoughts are born of my spirit. I know you all love me, but before I can be wholly satisfied with what you give me I want you to love one another as much as you love me. When I speak of myself I feel that I am only like a steward, that God has placed me in this position, and that you have

all been drawn here. How interesting it is that you have come from such different sources and that this, my physical form, has come here from such a long distance! Yet time, space, geographical boundary lines, these things vanish altogether as we are united through love. Love is the greatest factor. It is the greatest miracle, and we are given the power to be blessed through the miracle of love. Believe in it; believe in it; always believe in it! Never let any shadow fall upon your path to make you doubt its power.

Be always united through love. Feel for one another. Let your love be so powerful, potent, all-encompassing, that there is no room left for any evil. Feel that you are like so many posts placed by a Divine Hand, every one holding his corner, every one giving his support, in order to keep out all alien thoughts and feelings.

We pray for this, and our prayer is a very spontaneous outpouring. We give our all without feeling any lack or impoverishment. For when we renounce our self-will, at once we find infiintely greater fulfilment in following the Higher Will.

You are all, I know, going to be like so many brothers and sisters, uniting your efforts, so that this great weight that I have felt will altogether vanish; because your love, your understanding and your determination will make our prayers fruitful.

May every one of you be blessed with His Light! May we learn to carry His Light—the Light of love and understanding—every hour of the day and night. Remember that our spiritual life is not just a momentary thing.

Try to feel that God is always standing right beside you, when you are alone or when you are with others; then you will not yield to impatience; always you will try to please Him.

WHOM THE SELF CHOOSES

By Sister Devamata

(A Class-talk given at the Vedanta Centre, Boston.)

Throughout the Vedic scriptures there is but one call—to know the higher Self, to know God; and it is significant that we are driven on to discover this Truth not by threats of punishment, but by promise of great strength, and supreme blessings. There is a tendency in the West (and this is most true of the churches, though not of the Christ) to warn people of the dreadful things that will happen to them if they do not do right. The Vedanta philosophy, however, says that nothing dreadful will happen, that all men are children of the Immortal, and ultimately Truth will prevail. Ultimately all will know the great Self, the Divine. We read in the *Chandogya Upanishad,*

"The Infinite indeed is below, above, behind, before, right and left—It is indeed all this . . . He who sees this does not see death, nor illness, nor pain; he who sees this sees everything, and obtains everything everywhere."

Another statement, in the *Katha Upanishad,* relates to the sacred Word, the AUM:

"This Word is indeed *Brahman* (the Absolute), this Word is indeed the Supreme. He who knows this Word attains whatever he desires.

"This is the best Support; this is the highest Support; he who knows this Support is glorified in the world of *Brahman.*"

Finally, in the *Chandogya Upanishad,* we find a third statement that is explanatory of the other two:

"In It (the *Brahman*) all desires are contained. It is the Self, free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it

ought to desire, and imagines nothing but what It ought to imagine. . . .

" Those who depart from hence without having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds. But those who depart from hence, after having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is freedom in all the worlds."

This means that a man of illumination never has any desires contrary to the great cosmic Plan. If he did desire things apart from that Plan, he would not be a man of illumination. The two conditions are contradictory. One who has attained God-union has no interest apart from the interest of the whole. He does not differentiate or separate himself from the whole. The cosmic Will is his will; the cosmic Law is his rule of action.

It is clear, therefore, that the only way that we can have all our desires satisfied is to make our will His Will. Then naturally we shall desire nothing but what is in accordance with the supreme, universal Plan, and that cannot fail of fulfilment.

Today, in our present state of consciousness, we struggle and beat against the Law and try our best to have our own way. But at last, when we are all bruised and weary, we shall awaken to the fact that our way, could we gain it, would be a most unfortunate way; we yield finally to the great Will, and at once we find peace. We begin to see what it was that we really wanted all the time: we wanted happiness; we wanted strength; we wanted prosperity—true riches; that is, the riches of the Spirit; and these can come only through the cosmic Will and Power.

We have been told that there are certain means by which we may attain that vision needful for union with the One. Of these perhaps the greatest is truthfulness. We have

thought up to now that one tells the truth in order to be virtuous; but actually telling the truth is for the purpose of developing the sense of Truth within one. We possess faculties by which we perceive Truth, and by speaking the truth we cause these faculties to come into manifestation. That is why only a perfectly truthful person can know the Truth. He alone has a developed Truth perception.

Truthfulness in the spiritual life means absolute exactness in thought, word and action, with no slurring anywhere.

We all of us, so far as we are able, have been following the moral law, but our grasp of it has been largely intellectual, and we have accepted truth-telling as an intellectual necessity. It is, however, not enough to tell the truth: we must *be* truthful. In other words, every motion, the very expression of our face, each act, must be based on Truth. How often we avoid telling an absolute falsehood yet allow one to be inferred. How often we repeat things without knowing whether or not they are accurate; and how often we excuse ourselves and try to explain away our faults.

This is not practising the Truth. If you are in the wrong you must be willing to stand up and say that you are wrong. If anyone accuses you and you realize that you are at fault, admit it, just as you admit that you are short or tall, stout or thin. Feel always that the vital thing is to keep in line with the Truth, even if you are condemned or persecuted. "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Be upright, no matter how much you have to suffer for it. For until the Truth means more to you than comfort or honor, or happiness of any kind, you will not be able to perceive It. But when you have reached that point, no one can keep It from you. You will have earned It.

Be self-disciplined through right knowledge and through abstinence. Self-discipline means wiping out wrong habits of

the past and gradually effacing all careless ways of living. It means growing fundamental in our thought and character —reaching down to the root of everything.

Abstinence means keeping ourselves from forming detrimental new habits, abstaining from whatever leads us away from true vision. We must abstain not merely from things that are wrong, but from things that will not take us to the goal toward which we are traveling. For example, if you really desire vision of Truth, then you should abstain from all reading that diverts your mind from that end; you should abstain from associations that will turn you from your path; because one cannot be too careful, especially at the beginning.

The knower of the Self is one who has so purified his nature that he is able to find his home in God. He reaches that state of consciousness where all things are beautiful, life-giving, full of joy, and full of love.

He who loves another for what he can get out of him has a very poor kind of love. To love just for the joy of loving, however,—that is true love. Therefore if we love God because we cannot imagine anything sweeter or more adorable, then we are truly beginning to love.

Whoever forms desires in his mind is born again according to those desires. As long as we have desire for anything but God, we are led aside from the straight road that leads to divine realization. There are many kinds of desires and the world attracts us from many angles. You may say, "Other people, perhaps, are drawn aside, but I am not." Question yourself. Study yourself and note how directly you are moving in a straight line toward God. Daily watch your desires and see how many of them carry your mind away, even when they do not actually turn you from your chosen course. Those desires are seeds which some time must come up and bear fruit.

How are we going to know what is right and what is wrong? There is an easy rule. Always there are two things facing you, a higher and a lower; when you choose the higher, it is right; when you take the lower, that is wrong.

For him who is conscious of his true Self, all desires vanish, even here on earth; for that Self is the fulfilment of all desires. How foolish then for us to attempt to gratify our individual desires when there is a way by which we can at once gratify all our longings. We are like a man who opens his window a little crack in order to get a bit of sunlight, and then opens it another crack to get a little more sunlight, and altogether he receives but a glimmer, when by walking out of doors he could be bathed in sunshine. That is what we are doing all the time; we take a little of this and a little of that while here on earth it is possible to have all desires fulfiled permanently, if only we have the wisdom to desire the right things. Desire God with your whole heart and soul and every desire you could possibly imagine will be satisfied forever; for God is the ultimate superlative of all things; therefore it stands to reason that when we find Him we find all. Remember that Christ said, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul."

When your desires rise, therefore, instead of doing violence to them, turn them into prayer. By doing that you turn their intensity to the attainment of your Ideal. If it is success that you want, say, "There is only one way to be successful, only one place where true success can be found: That is in God. I will seek it there. Do Thou, O Lord, lead me to it." If there comes into your heart a deep longing for companionship, say, "There is no companion or playmate equal to God. Lord, I am lonely; do Thou satisfy this hunger in my soul!"

When the mind is not clear it is foolish to try to discrim-

inate. First turn to God. The very moment you drop your self and direct your whole thought toward Him, you come into the light. It is the difference between trying to thread a needle by candle-light and doing it in the broad daylight. By seeking God you change your whole vibration. Your very first cry to Him starts a downflow of His power into your troubled heart and crowded mind. If you keep on crying, victory cannot fail to be yours.

That higher Self-consciousness or Soul-consciousness, or, if you like, God-consciousness, cannot be gained by mere study of books. We cannot imagine Christ sitting down and writing a long dissertation about the Father. He was too busy living. We cannot imagine any of the great saints preparing scientific treatises. It is not through the printed page or the study of the printed page that we shall ever gain knowledge of the Soul, nor can this knowledge be acquired through intellectual understanding, or through reasoning about it.

One of the first requisites of spiritual practice is silence. The more we talk, the less we shall know. "He whom the Self chooses, by him alone is It attained." This may seem like partiality, but whom does the Self choose? If a mother in a family desires to give some rare object, such as an heirloom, to a child, to which child does she give it? Will it not be the one to whom it can best been entrusted, the one who will make the best use of it? So that great Self chooses the one who is pure in heart, watchful and always on guard. To that one it grants great treasures of knowledge.

We can all make ourselves worthy of this supreme gift. God is watching, hoping every moment that more of His children will become ready. He is not at all eager to keep this knowledge to Himself. That Soul of souls is longing to flood our whole being with knowledge of Its Being. Through

Its effort to make Itself known, to penetrate the obstructing walls of our nature and shine through into our heart and mind, It has driven us on toward our goal. Thus we may know that if that Soul has not chosen us, it is because we have not yet shown ourselves fit to be chosen.

That is why we must cease to resist Its power, and we do resist It every time we desire something from the world and rebel because we cannot have it. Each time we allow these lower desires to rise within us, we are resisting that effort of the Soul to make Itself felt and known, and it is because of this that we are not illumined. Illumination lies in our own hands, but it cannot be brought about all of a sudden; we must bring it about little by little, and we do this by transmuting our desires of the world into desire for God.

The Soul or the Self is not to be gained by one who is destitute of strength—who is faltering and wavering. It becomes very evident why that is not possible. If, for instance, on one day you are all enthusiasm and invoke the great Self within you and on the next day you move in the opposite direction, you can but create a terrible confusion in the mind. You allow the higher forces in your nature to begin to work in you, you open yourself to these spiritual influences, and then you turn back to the world. The result is that you are rent and torn, like a battle ground.

You must be absolutely strong, if not strong in your own strength, then in the knowledge of God's strength. Of all lives, the spiritual life is the one in which you can least afford to waver, because when you have had revealed to you even a small amount of higher Truth, your responsibility is very great. We should pray day after day and hour after hour that we shall not lack in strength or firmness. We cannot always be steadfast in knowledge, for our knowledge is limited, but we have to be steadfast in heart—the heart should be fixed on God.

A meditation, even when the mind is wandering, is still a helpful meditation if the heart remains fixed. When we sit in meditation, it will not matter how much the mind wanders if we just creep close to God in our hearts. There must be that steadfastness, that firmness, when we go to the Lord.

One who is without earnestness can gain no good. There must be great depths of earnestness, a getting way down below the surface. A flippant person is the opposite of an earnest person. He cannot go deep enough to realize anything. There must be depth in order to have a right meditation. Right meditation means an unbroken flow of thought towards the object of meditation. Everyone is meditating on something, but right meditation requires that the thought should be moving toward the Divine.

People often think about God, that is true; but they think of Him in relation to how much health or prosperity they can get from Him. They are thinking of Him the way they think of a physician or a lawyer. That is not the sort of meditation or prayer that brings God-knowledge. Before each task of the day we should stop and direct our mind Godward by offering up the fruits of that action to Him. There must be this steady flow of thought toward Him in the words that we speak, in everything that we do.

There will be and can be no rest till we admit, what cannot be denied, that there is in man a third faculty, which I call simply the faculty of apprehending the Infinite, not only in religion, but in all things; a power independent of sense and reason, a power in a certain sense, contradicted by sense and reason; but yet, I suppose, a very real power, if we see how it has held its own from the beginning of the world—how neither sense nor reason has been able to overcome it, while it alone is able to overcome both reason and sense.

—*Max Muller*

WISDOM CONSCIOUSNESS

By Sister Daya

(An Address delivered at the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, May 1, 1949.)

Swami Paramananda's book of "Daily Thoughts and Prayers" carries under the date of April 28th this salient thought concerning wisdom: "Wisdom does not consist in gathering information, it consists in finding a clear access to the Highest."

It is hard to conceive of any religion or genuinely spiritual effort on man's part that does not include the attainment of wisdom. Each man naturally has his own conception of what wisdom means. With some it may mean a more or less worldly type of understanding, a shrewd balancing of forces, a clever discernment of situations and the methods of dealing with them in order to get ahead of the next man, as the saying goes. With others, it may be more the wisdom of books, a theoretical grasp of great concepts which have been thought out by the wise of the human race and preserved in sacred and profane literature. This can be a sort of mummified wisdom, and though related to High Truth, it is not the sublime, the blessed wisdom which Teachers like Lord Christ and Lord Buddha experienced and sought to put into words, but which can never really be known second-hand, or through the accumulation of mere knowledge.

Genuine wisdom has its roots in the heart of man, in the very centre of his being, and comes to bloom only when consciousness leaves behind the muck and the soil and the confines of its former narrow sphere and begins to expand and spread out into a wider universe. This is the "Wisdom of God in a mystery" that Christ strove to convey to his followers. It is the wisdom that comes as the fruit of *Yoga* or

union. It is simple and spontaneous. It is like a lamp lighted in the soul; it is not gained through calculation or by much study: it is, you might say, the fragrance of the purified mind, the atmosphere in which he lives who has transcended the small, the petty and the particular and has taken his stand in the Infinite. For such a one, the bounds, the limits and the walls melt away, and he passes beyond creed, beyond dogma, beyond the differentiations that divide our world into the watertight compartments of countries, races and religions.

When a person begins to sense the light of God as we sense the light of the sun, as something universal, something eternally available, that every human being can enjoy and absorb, then for him wisdom is born.

The wise man has an intuitive sense of balance. He enters a situation through his mind and heart, especially through his heart, and becomes aware of the pulse of others. Thus one who is really mature in wisdom can bring peace where there is war, as St. Francis of Assisi states so tenderly in his prayer.

"Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace,
That where there is hatred I may bring love;
That where there is wrong I may bring the spirit
of forgiveness;
That where there is discord I may bring harmony;
That where there is error I may bring truth;
That where there is doubt I may bring faith;
That where there is despair I may bring hope;
That where there are shadows I may bring Thy light;
That where there is sadness I may bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort
than to be comforted;
To understand, than to be understood;

To love, than to be loved;
For it is by giving that one receives;
It is by self-forgetting that one finds;
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven;
It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life."

These lines express the prayer and desire of the wise. I should say rather, the deep, the profound understanding that can come only as one's inner being is able to blend with the inner being of others, and by a quick and sure intuition, know their needs, the state they are in at that moment, and the exact word that must be spoken in order to bring them solace, strength or peace.

A man who is blessed with this great gift would, I feel, never think of it as his own. The moment the thought would arise, "I am wise; I can heal; I can redeem!" the gift would be lost to him, or at least it would start to fade away. One of the marks of wisdom is a profound humility; and that humility comes when we begin to perceive ourselves as part of the great sweep of universal being.

Let me give an illustration. If you take a saturated salt solution and let it stand over night, in the morning you will find it full of tiny salt crystals. Well, the whole of creation is like that saturated solution, and all manifested life, taken together, is just a crystallization of that One Being into name and form and circumstance.

The wisdom consciousness does two things for a man: it gives him a great faith and an unbounded, unlimited strength. He no longer feels that he is a little fragment floating around without background or connections, but rather that his every thought has the whole universe of thought behind it and his every heart-beat moves in rhythm with the universal heart. He has the sure knowledge that he never stands alone, that he cannot lift his finger without causing a ripple in the vast

sea of existence, or as Francis Thompson puts it,

"Thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star."

Always there is the sense of infinitude before him, behind him, above him, below him, and especially within him; yet at the same time, this boundless concept fills him with a true and most profound humility, since in his little personal consciousness, in his separated self, he has become more and more aware of that Immensity which is the only Reality, so that he can claim nothing as his own. True, he has the living universe behind him, but so has every being, so has his enemy, his friend — all people.

Sometimes when this idea of oneness is taken up by an egotistic mind, this thought of the infinite Spirit implicit in the soul is held only as a mental concept and may induce an attitude of arrogance. It can feed egotism, so that a man will proclaim, "I am that Eternal! I am infinite power! I will be master of my fellow men! Why should I yield to anyone?"

The man of realization, however, to whom that inexplicable One, that hidden Wonder, that Glory comes shining through at every point of the universe, involuntarily bends his head before even the rocks and the stones and the dust at his feet, perceiving all as an expression of That. "How can I feel small," he says, "when I am so great? How can I feel great when I am so small?" The ocean of eternity floods his soul, and he knows at last the peace, the joy, the freedom that this type of humility brings.

It is a precious burden that he bears within his heart. Like a fragrance distilled into his life, it transforms him unconsciously. His thoughts are no longer of his little self, but of the firmamental Self, nor does he pride himself on any attainment, because he knows that it is all the work of the Divine Builder.

When this humility pervades the consciousness, it clears away all the rubbish and accumulation of lives of circumscribed understanding. The feelings that curve back into the self, the desires that return to the heart that sent them forth — all are swept away and there is left a clear, unobstructed channel. Nagging thoughts and fancies will come no more to disturb such a mind; nor will the little annoyances, envies, and petty feelings to which even the best of people succumb at times. For as the mystic treatise, "Light on the Path" says, "Great as is the gulf between the good man and the sinner, it is immeasurable between the good man and one on the threshold of Divinity."

This power, once it has been released in the soul, will never make a man feel, "Now I can subdue my brother." Rather he will bow to his brother, love his brother, and feel one with his brother; because everywhere and through everything he will see the same light shining.

When our religion ceases to be merely words, when we hold our breath with the wonder and blessedness of it all, then we have a truly awakened consciousness and there is born in the heart this natural wisdom, the wisdom of God, the wisdom of the hidden Self.

A man thus endowed is like a skilled physician. He knows unerringly where the sickness lies in any soul, where the wound is and the type of healing to impart. He knows without calculation when to speak and when to be silent; when to sow and when to reap, for the hidden rhythms as they are implied in the Hebraic Testament, are revealed to him as he lives and moves with the tremendous rhythm of the universe.

Once, years ago, I shared an apartment with a friend of mine in New York City, a clever girl, who was trying to make her way in the literary world and was having a hard struggle.

One morning she came to me and told me of a dream she had had the night before and which she felt had a deep significance. She said that she seemed to be struggling in the midst of a great ocean. There were huge waves buffeting her and high, menacing swells towering above her. When she tried to resist them, they swept over her and submerged her until she felt that she was drowning; but just when it seemed to her that she was almost gone, she heard a voice say, "It is only when we go against the tide that we are broken." At once she ceased fighting the waves. Instead she went with them and they carried her on their crests, and she knew a sense of joy and freedom. It is when we go against the current of life that we find our defeat. This does not mean that we have to surrender to the obstacles that confront us. There may be a time for surrender, but there is a time for opposition too. Occasionally things cannot be redressed, their hour has not struck, and then if we contend with them we become like the crock which breaks itself against the wall, as Chaucer puts it.

In this connection I recall something that Swami Paramananda once said to a member of the Vedanta Centre community. He had given her a reproof and she had gone to him in protest. "Swami," she complained, "I do not see why you should reprove me for this when you say not a word to So and So who does the same thing constantly and is never corrected." "My child," he answered, "in your case the fault is not typical. This may be the first time you have been guilty of it; therefore if I speak to you now, you may never repeat the mistake; whereas with that other person, it is so deeply ingrained in her nature that it may take her lives to overcome it. If I were to correct her every time she offends, it would do little good and would only cause friction between her and me. Instead I try to build up in

her those qualities that ultimately will overcome her weakness."

Here we can see wisdom in action. Sometimes in our ignorance we hammer away at something in a person that offends us. We feel that we must destroy it. But maybe the time is not ripe for its destruction and by using our force against it, we merely compel it to come forth in some other perhaps uglier form. We should instead do as the Swami did, strive to build up its opposite.

It is only the higher wisdom that knows when to confront a thing and when not to lay too much stress upon it. With children there is always this problem. A wise mother realizes what intuition is needed, what affiliation there must be with the hungers and thirsts which the child is experiencing. She has to know what will help and heal and how to avoid what will only wound or destroy.

The spiritually illumined holds this attitude toward all living things. He does not feel that he is here to sit on a judgment seat or be harsh and cruel to his fellow beings and try to force them to conform to his particular way of seeing things. He is here to move in love, and in oneness no matter how unpleasant a person may be, or even how evil his attitude, the truly wise and enlightened strive how best they can bring to him help and healing, that he may enjoy the happiness he feels has been denied him, but which, of course, in his ignorance he has been denying himself. Despondency, hatred, anger, these are sicknesses of the soul which call for a cure, not a punishment. Only God can provide that cure — the God in us who, when the way is open, reaches out through our hearts to all mankind.

To be a conscious instrument of that Divine is the most wonderful and beautiful expression of human life and it comes as the result of an awakened consciousness. Consciousness

is the great factor. When we are conscious merely of a divided world, of thine and mine, of this and that, of living a little isolated life in a little isolated body, when only through a great stretch of the imagination we can think of ourselves as an integral part of the life of the universe, then all that we bring forth will be limited, even harmful, and certainly shadowed by ignorance.

On the other hand, when the consciousness expands, when we begin actually to find our home in the hearts and minds of other beings, we sense with a pure intuition the condition of those around us, and out of that expanded consciousness will issue forth the more Godlike bestowals.

We often think of ourselves as striving to manifest one virtue or another, as if it were for us to build up within us goodness, or courage, or humility, when really the only thing we need to do is to turn to the God within and realize the presence in our soul of that ever-present Being. We can go to that One as the child goes to the mother; we can surrender to that One as the child surrenders itself to the arms of the mother. We do not have to have some vast intellectual concept that we cannot contain within our limited mentality; all that is required is for us to give ourselves to that One in those silent hours when we are alone with our own soul.

The other day I thought, "Suppose someone should come to me and say what has been said to many others: 'You do not know it, but you have a malady that is absolutely incurable and in a year you will be dead.' " No doubt at first it would be a tremendous shock. I could imagine looking around at the world and thinking, "Of course I knew that some time I should have to die, but so soon — so soon to throw off my body! So soon to plunge into the unending mystery!" Then a sort of chill would grip the heart—a fear.

We have come to think of our body as so affiliated with our being that we shrink from even picturing it as going down in death. But I am convinced that if one is at all spiritually inclined, this feeling of dread will pass and in its place will come a great sense of freedom.

Why do we need to worry about death or anything? We belong to that everlasting Spirit and with one complete act we can give ourselves over, body and soul, to that Eternal, surrendering ourselves from the very root of our being. Once we do this, we can lie back in the Divine arms, as a child who is aware only that the mother will take care of it, and that so long as the mother's arms are around it, nothing can go wrong. Filled with unshakeable faith in the never-failing care of that Mother-power, I think there could be only a great peace and a serene joy even in the face of death.

There is a poem by Swami Paramananda that gives this divine assurance:

"Didst thou not come naked from thy mother's womb?
Didst thou not have thy soul in safety even before
thy body's birth?
Why art thou then fretful and anxious?
One who watched over thee then, watches over thee
now,
One who loved thee then, loves thee now.
My mind, remember this, and be still."

Here is the real refuge for the human spirit. To the intellectualist, however, this intercourse and interchange between the human consciousness and the Divine may seem too simple. Yet in it lies invulnerable strength, courage and deep wisdom, a wisdom beyond the wisdom of the world, a wisdom that will shine around the one who possesses it, like a light of which he is unaware. In his utter humility he will be surprised at the praise of men, as Christ was sur-

prised when men called Him good. "Why call ye me good?" He said. "There is none good but the Father." It is because of this abandonment of self that His name is remembered and will be remembered down through the ages. Lord Buddha, likewise, and all the spiritually elect, bear this sign and symbol of godhead.

Francis of Assisi used to say, "Why do men run after me? Why do they run after me? I am just a little poor man. Why do they care about me?"

One day when he and a Brother were out with their begging bowls he was rejoiced that this Brother received the greater portion. So far as his own ego was concerned, it did not trouble him that the people had been more drawn to his companion. It was this selflessness that has caused Francis to be a saint for the whole world. There is none more universally loved than he who was "humble as a blade of grass with endurance like a tree;" who spoke with the voice of love and walked by the light of faith. Who shall say that he was not wise? Is not this wisdom?

The great Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, gives the following description of wisdom:

"Humility, unostentatiousness, non-injuring, forgiveness, simplicity, purity, steadfastness, self-control: this is declared to be wisdom; what is opposed to this is ignorance."

Few indeed would define wisdom in these words. Most people would be apt to think of it as something which comes as the result of deep study rather than as the accompaniment of the consecrated life. Wisdom, bliss, fearlessness, freedom —all the beautiful qualities and conditions that we seek one by one, as if they were butterflies to be captured in a net,—come spontaneously when God-consciousness is attained. They are implicit in that consciousness. They cannot be separated from it. When you touch that consciousness, in-

stantly you touch bliss; you know that basic humility; you know wisdom and freedom, absolute steadfastness of faith and vision — you know all the things that exalt a man's spirit and lift him above the turmoil and turbulence of the outer world; and when you go out among men, you will not have to wrack your brains for the solution of the problems that will be brought to you. Every problem contains its own solution, which the wise can see. When you no longer ask love from anyone, but are ready to give it abundantly, love will flow in on you and lives will be brought to you to be made whole.

Mere knowledge betrays. What men feel they know today, they will deny tomorrow; but the light of wisdom is eternal; God is One; Truth is One; Love is One. Love is not different in this land from love in any other land; or in your heart or in my heart from that in any other heart. Always it is the same love. The same light shines upon all; we breathe the same air; the same earth supports us; the same Truth, the same beauty, and the same God sustain us. There is no division save that which we ourselves create, and by means of which we shut ourselves in a narrow room into which He cannot enter. Let our hearts, therefore, be as wide as the sea, and our minds as lofty as the sky.

These are great ideals. Perhaps they seem too far beyond us. Yet why should we go on in the same old way, following an ancient rut? If not in this life, in some life we are going to be confronted with the challenge to arise and awake — to arise from our sleep of ignorance and awake to our true nature. Some day we shall have to make the first move and affirm in our heart: "I am not this small, selfish, futile individual, born but to die; I am born to enter into the Kingdom of God and I may just as well start now."

Lao-tze says: "A journey of a thousand li begins with a single step."

TRIBUTE TO SWAMI PARAMANANDA

FOUNDER OF THE VEDANTA CENTRE

Jane I. Raymond

Forsythia blooms along the river Charles,
Midst April showers,
Vedanta Centre windows open wide,
To golden flowers.

This House where once did dwell a soul aflame
With holy joy,
Still strives to keep the golden lamp he lit,
Without alloy.

With what dynamic courage did he come,
Youthful and gay.
Bringing the age-old wisdom of the East,
Seeking no pay.

To help men out of darkness into light,
His sole desire,
To tune their ears to harmony and love,
Celestial choir.

To stir the minds of men to high resolve,
The urge to rise,
To break the shackles of defeat and fear,
To scale the skies.

Peace and compassion wide and deep and true
Did he impart;
Freely he gave, for did he not possess
The selfless heart?

So let us, joyous, on this April night,
With all humility,
Salute this soul, Bright Messenger of God,
Paramanandaji.

Hail and farewell to thee!

OF LIFE AND DEATH

By Aline Johnson

As a young theological graduate shook the hand of congratulation of his former pastor, he remarked: "I know about Life, but what about Death?" and the sage pastor replied: "If you know the one, you know the other." A corollary to this answer immediately presented itself: If you know about yourself, you know God.

What is Life? What is its meaning? The answers given by all religions are the same—the search for God, reaching out for one's Source. The purpose of life is to gain experience, to develop character. To be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Life is a school and we are in different grades, according to the stage of our growth, to our special grade of intelligence, and inspiration to right action we possess. Life means character-building, spiritual awakening, growing in God-likeness, the most important thing in the world. It is a great school with many disappointments, joys and sorrows, which are all opportunities for growth in the way we transmute them.

If the new young preacher realized the truth of the above statements, he attained great understanding and wisdom for his mission.

Mankind has one innate, irrepressible craving that must be satisfied by some ideal. Human nature is like universal

nature in its abhorrence of a vacuum. It feels an intuitional yearning for a Supreme Being or Power; for without God, the universe seems a dead, soulless body. Our spiritual being, that which lives and thinks independent of body, *knows* there exists a God in nature. Nothing can uproot this intuitional feeling. "Descending spirits have conversed with man and told him secrets of the world unknown." That which can be fully realized by our reason and senses is but superficial; for they can never reach the true inner substance of things.

Life is a riddle and makes no sense until we accept the theory of Reincarnation or Rebirth; for in it alone is the answer to all the problems of life. To get at the deep reality back of all matter, we must go to sages, seers and great Teachers, who lived the life and learned the doctrine. They differ little in their teaching of Truth, for Truth is ever One, though various the garments. Pythagoras, who spent twelve years in Egypt, (where Moses acquired his wisdom and Jesus spent his earlier years) became immersed in Oriental philosophy. Toynbee tells us that Memer, a Hindu, was the first king of Egypt. He trecked with his cohorts across the hot sands and brought the civilization of his mother country, its culture, art and science, to Egypt.

Here, then, it was that Pythagoras found the Pearl of Great Price, which he later transmitted to his most earnest and devoted disciple, Plato. Plato taught his master's doctrine, that God is universal mind diffused through all things, and also the dogma of immortality. This teaching that God is the Divine Ground, underlies all true philosophies and is the "Perennial Philosophy," as Aldous Huxley designates it.

Buddha taught the influx of divine life. The doctrines of Buddha and Plato are identical. What Buddha taught in India, Pythagoras and Plato taught in Greece.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna says to Arjuna: "The Supreme Lord abides in all things equally. He is undying in the dying. He who sees thus, sees truly." This is the teaching of the Vedas.

The Chinese sage, Lao-tze, says: "TAO is everywhere. The perfect Father, the great TAO, is invisible but permeates everywhere. TAO is the source of everything: of the trees, the flowers and birds; of the sea, desert and rocks; of light and darkness; of heat and cold; of day and night; of summer and winter, and your own life."

Why is it that we do not see this all-pervading Spirit that permeates all? It is because our ordinary finite vision is too dull. The Spirit is visible only to those seers whose intellect has been purified by constant thought on the Supreme, and whose vision has become subtle and keen through steadfast meditation. The eyes of the spirit must be opened, as were St. Paul's.

All the wise men and teachers accepted the theory of rebirth and believed that "the embodied soul passes through childhood, youth and old age and in the same manner it goes from one body to another." They developed their inner faculties, through which they widened their experience and grew in wisdom. They came to lead the nations to God and proclaimed the Way of Life in simple words. Fired with love and faith and inspired by Truth, they never used their wisdom for selfish ends. Jesus spurned the temptations of Satan. Great kings who thirsted for worldy power and renown, for earthly immortality, lie buried under the sands of forgottenness. The lowly, selfless beggar and the humble Carpenter, by their life and message, are still living and revered for all eternity.

Jesus said: "Ye must be born again." Many poets and authors, among the latter, Victor Hugo, were believers in

PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

the many-life theory. Dryden wrote:

> "Souls cannot die. They leave a former home
> And in new bodies dwell and from them roam.
> Nothing can perish, all things change below,
> For spirits, thru all form, may come and go,"

"Delayed it must be for more lives yet through worlds I must traverse, not a few," wrote Robert Browning. Walt Whitman thought that there was no doubt that he had died ten thousand times before. John Masefield believes that we are born and reborn until "this case, this clogging mould, be smithied all to kingly gold."

If it is true that we live on earth again, how is it that we do not remember our prevoius life, the deeds for which we suffer or are rewarded in this? The brain is the instrument of memory of the soul and being new in each life, with but a fixed capacity, the Soul is not able to use it for the new life. As the new brain had no part in the life last lived, it is unable to remember. That power of memory has still to be developed and evolved.

Very holy men and great sages have remembered their past incarnations. Sri Krishna was one of these. He says to Arjuna: "Both you and I have gone through many births. I know them all, but thou knowest them not." Annie Besant remembered several of her past incarnations. Lafcadio Hearn relates an interesting story about a little Japanese boy, who remembered the town in which he was born, his parents, his own name and theirs in his former life. He led his devoted grandmother, who believed him, to the town and home and found there that all he remembered was a fact.

Most of us, at some time in our life, have had this experience of a previous contact or familiarity with a place or situation that we know we never encountered in the present life. Even words spoken at this occurrence were anticipated and heard before they were spoken. It is an intuitive memory

of a deep, distant past. If all our thoughts and words are carried over from life to life and indelibly recorded on the tablets of the soul, such a recollection or "memory of nature," as it is called, can be understood.

Man is involved and evolved. Darwin was a skeptic and reasoned with only one side of the equation! He mixed his theories and facts. There can be no evolution without involution. God (Involution) is first in all manifestation from the lowest to the highest, and is first, last and always! Once upon a time we lived in Eden with God, in His image. He breathed into our nostrils the breath of life. When He punished our disobedient forbears, He gave us "coats of skin," the fleshly body, transforming us into physical men (Evolution). His image has been hidden ever since, within the "cave of the heart." There God *is!* He moves in us, as He has His Being in us. We see, hear, move and act through Him, for we are His instruments. We are Spirit, involved in a body, which evolves and must be refined life after life, until our character reaches perfection. "Upon ages of struggle a character is built." With courage and resolution, by meditation and prayer, cultivating humility, gentleness, forbearance and all the virtues, putting aside earth-wants and needs, we ultimately attain at-one-ment with the Supreme.

We must be born and die many times as *Man,* until we see God. Each individual soul must overcome its limitations, as did the great Teachers and Prophets, who preached the encouraging word, that we can become like them. "Believe me, miracles are born within us and not without us. Would not God have been unjust if He had condescended to show His power to some and withhold it from others? The most amazing of God's prophets have not been superior to what *you* might become," said Seraphita to Wilfred.

The race evolves only through the individual. "If thou wouldst become a prophet of the Most High, busy thyself with self-reform. Keep guard over thy nature. Spiritualize thy instincts and be sincere. Go inwards, not outwards. Heaven is within thee and the road to it is through thine own soul. Thou thyself must make the effort. By thyself thou canst be saved and by no other." This is the exhortation of an enlightened Soul. We must connect our life with a lofty ideal and thereby grow in God-likeness to attain freedom. The spirit must work intelligently within, and work in cooperation with God's plan for freedom. As soon as we acquire knowledge of the Supreme, we are liberated. If we fail to attain such knowledge before the soul is separated from the body, then we must take other bodies and return again and again, until through varied experiences in new bodies, we realize the nature of the Supreme and our relation to Him.

Thoughts are the structure of character. By our thoughts we make our life. They are food for growth toward spiritual development. Buddha said: "Let us inspect our thoughts, that we do no evil, for as we sow, we shall reap." We cannot think harm without doing harm. Love, hatred or a magnet each exists according to its nature, physical or spiritual attraction. Love creates selflessness, purity of heart, and peace, and elevates character. Hatred produces selfishness and discontent and debases character. From day to day we sow and reap. We reap the fruits of our past life and, at the same time, we are setting up new causes, whose effects accrue to us in the future incarnation. All is under Law, a law of absolute justice, functioning twofold as reward and punishment. Reward and retribution are not accident or chance or "respecters of person." Even though we do not know the cause, the effect would not come to us had

we not at some time furnished the cause. Truly, by our own thoughts and acts are we makers of our destiny, the architects and builders of our state of existence. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought, it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him." So says the Buddhist Scripture.

Birth, growth, decay is the law of earthly life. Everything in this world is fleeting; from the lowest to the highest, all just perish. No one ever existed who could retain eternal youth or stay his body from dying, despite elixirs, or the diabolic black magic of Margrave in Lytton's fascinating story. Death is inevitable. We read in the Bible about the immortal nature of the soul and hear many sersons about it, and yet we are always afraid of dying. It is because we have no understanding of our true nature, of the real Self. We think we are the body alone, and therefore wish to live on. "What then is produced from death?" Socrates asks Cebes. "Life," was the reply. We leave behind only the instruments through which the Spirit operated. The eyes, the ears, the muscles, all the means of transmission are still with the gross body, but that which functioned through them is gone. We also leave behind our stocks and bonds, jewels and antiques, the things "that moth and dust corrupt" and take only character with us, the soul-record of our past life.

If a seer is one who sees things which others do not and cannot see, then Emanuel Swedenborg was not only a mystic, but also a seer. He perceived "in the spirit in the midst of my body," as Daniel describes his own vision. He teaches dogmatically from things heard and seen. He uses no logic or rhetoric, simply narrates what he saw and heard. He has been called the Prince of Dreamers. He lived with the angels

in the spiritual world, although retaining his physical body, and he wrote at their dictation. No one has written more beautifully or consolingly about death and "the heavenly country." His words are as healing and soothing as David's harp to Saul.

His religious philosophy was based entirely on a revealed spiritual interpretation of the Bible. Many of his books could appropriately be given place in the Bible, alongside the Revelations of St. John.

Swedenborg also started with a Divine Being for his first cause. Everything is derived from heaven and returns to heaven. There is no reality in life, in the universe, but the Lord's. Man originates nothing, has nothing, is nothing himself. When the bond which confines the soul and body is dissolved by death, it ascends upward in obedience to spiritual attraction. There is a natural and a spiritual body, the former being parted and destroyed, the latter being without a "seam" and indestructible. "It was never designed that we should live on the terrestrial plane forever, nor having once escaped its bondage, we should ever return again." He makes heaven, not the earth, the arena for growth. "In the spiritual world they educate the heart first and then the intellect, for in that world only the *good* become wise. Many a learned man, loaded with academic honors, proud of his knowledge and memory, is stripped of everything he acquired. He must receive divine love in his heart, as wisdom and true knowledge have no permanent existence independent of good affections. The biblical correspondence to the above is: "Whoever hath, to him shall be given and whoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." Swedenborg's statement must always be read in juxtaposition with the correspondent Bible quotation. To know the correspondences of the Word with spiritual

things, the visible with the invisible, is "to have the heavens in your understanding." Perhaps many of the passages in his books have a spiritual meaning we do not fathom. We must study the "correspondences" to get the spiritual interpretation.

Life and death are interchangeable terms. What is death here is life beyond, and rebirth here means dying somewhere else. As we pass from life to life through countless ages, the immortal Spirit is always you, the immortal Self. At the final death, when all the mystery of world-life has been solved, we attain the goal. The individual self is merged with the Great Self and we are once again at home with the Father.

Fear not, nor be afraid. There is no death.

George N. Stockwell has painted the following beautiful word picture of the "Reality of Dying."

"I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength and I stand and watch her, until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud, just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

"Then someone at my side says: 'There! She's gone!' Gone where? Gone from *my* sight, that is all. She's just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side, and she is just as able to bear her load of living weight to her destined port.

"Her diminished size is in *me,* not in *her.* And just at this moment when someone at my side says, 'There! She's gone!' there are *other* eyes watching her and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: 'There she comes!'

"And that is dying.' "

THE RED MOUNT

By Maurice Collis

(A former member of the Indian Civil Service, who for twenty-one years was stationed in Burma, writes of a mystic moment on "the scented mountain." This article is reprinted from October 15th, "Vogue." Copyright 1947, The Condé Nast Publications, Inc.)

The Orient has been deflowered of its marvels. Our armies have marched there so much; our men have suffered such bitter things; our explosives have shattered it. Even the isle I am about to speak of, was over-run in the struggle. I knew it twenty-seven years ago, when, despite the assault of commerce and the telegraph, some corners of the East were still inviolate.

If you follow the 19th parallel of latitude through Mexico City and Hawaii and continue on, you reach Siam and, passing through Burma to Arakan, will find the island of Manaung lying upon that coast. It will be marked Cheduba on the map, for that is its Indian name, which was adopted when the British first came there in 1825. Its shape is circular and its diameter twenty miles. First is a plain that grows a rice, small of grain and of subtle smell, which is considered a luxury by those who can distinguish the hundred tastes of rices. Beyond the plain is rolling ground and woods, and among them a hill, Taung-ni, the Red Mount, which is the theme of this fragment of memory.

At the time of which I write, Manaung was within my jurisdiction. I was a member of that body, now passed into history, whose duty it was to administer the Indian empire. Each province—in this case Burma—was divided into districts, and in charge of each district was an Englishman who had received the most advanced academic education which his country afforded. How strange it was to go from Oxford

or Cambridge into that loneliness! On first coming out or, later, on returning from leave in London or Paris, it was as if a curtain was let down between you and life.

The capital of the district in which Manaung was situated had the name Kyank-pyu, White Stones, a little port of mat and wooden dwellings, with a government office and my house by a beach of white shingle. As no English people lived there, except one old man who had not been in England since his youth, the recreations which enliven existence in Eastern ports—games, cards, dances and the like—did not exist and you were thrown back upon your own resources. A good education, however, is a mine into which you can delve. There is reading, and there is also writing. I used to write poetry by my open window, as the wind sighed through the spikes of the casuarina trees, called also beef-wood trees, for their timber is the colour of raw beef; both in outward appearance and by reason of their sighing they resemble firs, though altogether of a different genus. I can hear their moaning still; it was all that is forlorn.

Being able to enter the world of poetry, my sight was strengthened, as were all my senses, and I could see, hear, and smell better than before. My mood set me longing for country marvels; in so remote a place there must be strange things hid. Official duties were very light, and as one of them was to tour my jurisdiction, I was able to go deep into the countryside. Such a tour took me in the month of February to Manaung which was fifty miles down the coast. I had not heard of its Red Mount; I had heard nothing of Manaung except a rumour of beauty.

The approach on the eastern side was through mangrove, but once beyond that blue-green lattice, I found myself by a village in stubble fields, on which were grazing small black cattle. A resthouse for travellers was on rising ground.

Into this I moved with my servants and clerk. As is usual at that season, the weather was bright, dry and cool.

It was the custom in those lands for notables to call when the head of a district arrived on visit. Next morning the headmen of the neighbouring villages came one by one and sat on the verandah. Such people are quick to detect a mood: I did not seem as bent on checking their registers as an official usually was. They became more easy and began to talk at large. In their talk was mention of the Red Mount.

"What of that mount?" I asked, catching at the word.

"It is scented," they replied.

I was much charmed by this and asked them to be plainer.

"The mount is scented," they said, "but not by visible means, for it is a grassy hill without blossoming trees or trace of flowers. A spirit has descended there and the sweet smell is its emanation."

This was more than I had ever hoped to hear. What could be stranger or rarer? I was profoundly delighted. Nevertheless, I doubted: all my education bade me pause. They read my mind and, regretting, perhaps, that they had ventured so far, fell into silence. But I think my doubt was less refusal to believe than fear of disappointment. I said: "If I went to the mount, should *I* smell the scent?"

"It is always there," they said.

"How far is it to go?"

"Rather far. It is better to sleep a night on the way."

Evidently it meant a walk of some fifteen miles. No transport existed on the island. And after walking that distance could I really hope to find the scent? But there must be something or these men, so solid and respectful, would not be eager to conduct me: for now it was evident that they wished to take me there.

That afternoon we set out, walking through the stubble fields or by footpaths winding under palms, under tamarinds and banyan trees. The headmen now spoke openly.

"It is most fortunate for the island that a heavenly being should make it his abode," they said. "The crops are always good, the rice delicious."

"How long has he been here?" I asked.

"Since before our time."

"Does he show himself ever?"

"No, it is just the scent, but his presence can be felt."

"What spirit is he?"

"He is one of the many divine beings that live in paradise," said the eldest headman, who had a grave, mild face. "He came down for love of us and to look after the isle. And maybe also, because he wanted his own garden to walk in. The lawns of paradise are less private; it is like a court with much coming and going."

In my mood, this seemed a reasonable explanation. Had we not ourselves record of an ancient, the Lord, who had made just such a sweet garden and walked there at evening? And with this comparison in my mind I looked about me at the people. They were on the threshing floors, treading the grain with oxen, and pounding away the husk, winnowing in the breeze: there rose from them a golden air of content and happiness.

Before dusk we came to the hamlet where the headmen had arranged for me to stay the night. As there was no rest-house, the chief man of the hamlet, who had been apprised by messenger of my coming, had put me up an arbour of mats and thatch, ample shelter in such clement weather. My servants cooked supper and I ate in the open. When I finished, the headmen approached. "It is the custom in this hamlet to make offerings before an ascent," they said; "the moon is rising; the girls will dance."

It happened to be the night of the full moon. The houses lay in black shadow and from their darkness there issued into the oyster light a troupe of girls, who sang as they moved with measured steps. Their song was an invocation, and gliding in a meander they stooped in reverence as they passed a mat, upon which were piled fruit and flowers. Music accompanied them, a staccato of graded drums, gongs, and a flute. After a while these priestesses ceased and there was silence. The old headman said to me in a low voice: "I saw the signs. They were propitious."

It was arranged that we should start before dawn the next morning, so as to reach the mount as the sun rose, for that was the hour when the scent was strongest. I slept sound in my arbour and was awakened when the moon was hanging in the western sky. We were soon on our way, following a path that led through woods and over broken country. Presently there came that strange moment when the dawn conquers the full moon; quickly its pearl is tarnished—you look and its reign is over. At this first freshness of earliest day, while we were still some miles from the mount, suddenly a perfume, most rapturously sweet, passed over me. I stopped. It was gone. I sniffed. "Did you smell that?" I cried, astounded. "Where did that perfume come from?" We were among sparse trees on a dry slope; not a flower or bush or tree could I find.

The headmen regarded me with satisfied eyes. "We smelt nothing," said the mild elder. "Only on the mount itself are we favored. That you should smell the emanation here is because the divinity came to meet you."

The experience was intoxicating, albeit so fleeting that I was left confused. Had I smelt anything? But if not, why had I stopped and cried out? Where now was the scent gone? If it had come from hidden flowers near-by, why

could I not smell it again? Moreover, the headmen had not smelt it. How could that be? I had no answer.

We resumed our journey, the headmen talking among themselves and glancing at me with increased interest. After a while we emerged from a belt of trees and, just as the sun rose, I saw in front of me an isolated hill, its earth showing red and bare except for a coarse grass. A white shrine was on the top of it. They had no need to tell me it was the Red Mount. But though its first slopes were close, I could detect no scent, and turning to the headmen I exclaimed: "There is nothing!"

They were in no wise disconcerted. "Not here," they replied, "but we are not yet upon the mount." And smiling they invited me to advance. I quickened my pace till I was running, yet though so eager, I doubted; how could what they assured me be true? But, sure enough, the instant my feet touched the red earth on the margin of the hill, I was enveloped in perfume. "The spirit is present," said the headmen simply; they knelt and prostrated themselves.

With growing wonder I climbed the hill, looking everywhere for an explanation. "The whole hill is drenched with his essence," they said. I took up a piece of the red earth—it had the smell of a flower; the grass and other occasional plants had the same smell; everything was pervaded by it, as thought an emanation were coming out. At the summit I sat down on the shrine's platform. There was no image within the niche; its tenant was an invisible presence. The Island circle stretched below; eastward was the far blue line of the mainland and close under me to westward a white strand on which rollers were booming. With the perfume moving round me, I remained silent for a long time.

Before leaving, I gathered pieces of earth and stones and grass, that seemed most strongly scented, and took them

with me. But on the way back the scent began to fail and was quite gone before I reached home. There I made what inquiries I could, but though I heard stories of the Red Mount and of early kings who had visited it, I never met an Englishman who had been taken there; the headmen, indeed, told me that I was the first. No accounts of it, therefore, existed in print, though it was marked, as Taung-ni, on my office maps. I left Kyank-pyu three months later without being able to draw any conclusion, and have never been back.

In after years, I came in my reading upon mention of other sacred mountains of the East. They were always the seat of a cult under properly constituted guardians; and it was stated as usaul that the transcendent beings residing on them manifested their presence by voices, scents of flowers, or emanations of light. The principal officiants, it seemed, were mediums, and they it was who produced the manifestations. When I applied these hints, I began to see my experience more clearly, though essentially it remained a mystery. The Red Mount must have been the seat of an old cult, never well known, which had survived into modern times on account of its remoteness. The headmen who had taken me there, prompted to this, perhaps, by omens they had seen, were its hereditary guardians, and their mediums resided in the hamlet near the mount. I had thus been lucky enough to get sight of an old order of things, and since I had been throughout not in an anthropological, but a poetical, frame of mind, I had experienced an exhilaration and a happiness comparable to that which a genuine worshipper would have felt. Attuned in this curious way, I was able to understand in the deepest sense.

Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss. —*Ecclesiasticus*

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTEBOOK

(*Continued from the Spring Issue*)

Not long ago, the disciple, while looking through some old papers, came across the following notation:

"Long, cold, rainy days at the Vedanta Centre invited a nap during the afternoon hours; but to this inclination the Swami said, 'Members of the community should resist the temptation to lethargy'."

It has been indicated that the Centre at Queensberry Street was conducted as a spiritual home, not as a rigid institution. Ideals were held up rather than rules laid down. Resting times were not discouraged by the Swami who had a profound understanding of the needs of his associates; but he felt that it was essential that there be discrimination between real need for repose and the *tamasic* or heavy condition which is apt to grip one on dull days or during shut-in periods. The community was told of the rule in the monasteries of the Ramakrishna Mission which forbade a novice from touching his bed, in the sense of lying upon it, between the time of rising and the hour of retiring, save, of course, in case of illness; though nothing so drastic as this was ever even suggested as a regulation for the Boston members.

Often at the Centre before taking the physical exercises, which had become a nightly custom, there would be yawning and stretching and manifest sleepiness; but the exercises would overcome this, and as a result, everyone would go to her room in a lighter state of mind and body, which the Swami taught was far better at the end of the day than is a dull and dead condition. For sleep can play its own part in the inner development, if body and mind are rightly attuned before entering into it.

The notation brought back to mind certain other points

connected with the life at the Centre—aspects of training which could be empty of significance or extremely suggestive, depending upon the state of the receiving mentality. These all had to do with what has been referred to as a sense of sanctity, the consciousness which must arise in the mind of an aspirant who seeks to make the Presence of God a living reality not only in his own life, but in life itself. This effort, if sincere and fundamental, must ultimately change his approach to all created things. For even though that Divine Presence may not have been realized, to move and act as though it had been, and seek ever with the imagination to feel that Presence as an actuality, and acknowledge it in all we think and say and do, will help to bring about realization, and what may first have seemed unnecessary even empty motions and modes of living will become poignant expressions of an awakening consciousness.

The life story of the "divine sage," Narada, attests the value of unwavering practice and the use of the creative imagination, even in the face of denial.

According to the legend, Narada, in his former birth, when but a mere child, mingled with the *Sadhus* or wandering monks, and *Yogis* until he became imbued with a burning love of the Divine. Thus, when they departed, although he was still only a little boy, he himself put on the garb of renunciation and went forth to seek the Truth. It was not long before he was blessed with a vision of Deity, which filled him with supreme bliss; but though his fervor continued unabated, not once again throughout the years of his long life did he ever experience a return of the vision. It is, however, written, that he continued to meditate and pray unceasingly, and lived every moment as if he were in the presence of God. As a result of this one-pointed devotion, he was reborn with the power to pass between earth and heaven at will.

A sense of sanctity, so the Swami taught, must always include gracious manners, reverence expressed for one's fellow beings, especially for those to whom respect is due. "Words without thoughts never to heaven go!" But thoughts without words also may fall below. Manners, moreover, were never intended to be merely pretty gestures. The Swami in his own life and being demonstrated how they really complete the spiritual picture.

Shortly after the disciple's arrival in Boston, she had occasion one day to leave the Swami's study in order to procure a book. In her eagerness she made a hurried exit, turning her back on the room (and of course on the Swami) as she did so. It was an entirely normal exit from the Western point of view, but not normal for India; for when the disciple returned, the Swami remarked casually to one or two others who were seated there, "Hindu women have a natural depth and fineness of feeling. No Hindu woman on leaving a room, would ever turn her back on her spiritual teacher—or anyone else so far as that goes; always she would manage to slip out facing those who were left." A hot flame seemed to burn in the disciple's heart and she answered impetuously, "Whether I turned my back or not, no Hindu girl can feel for you greater reverence than I feel!"

The Swami smiled. He knew that the seed he had thus planted would sprout and grow; and sprout and grow it did, bringing with it much fragrant bloom for the disciple.

Jesus of Nazareth once said, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

Undoubtedly the thoughts that are in the mind, and the feelings born from the heart, are paramount. None would deny this, least of all Swami Paramananda. There are, no doubt, great *Yogis* who are so immersed in the realization

of oneness that for them there is no clean or unclean. Sri Ramakrishna, however, one of the greatest, moved in an atmosphere of such pure *Sattwa* or illumination, that in order to protect his physical body he had to insist upon the observance of extreme sanctity. There were certain ones from whom he would not receive service or take food; there were hands whose touch seemed to burn him. He knew that a meal cooked by one carrying evil or angry thoughts could act like a poison upon those who partook of it. Obversely, food from the Master's plate was considered as a blessing. It was looked upon by the disciples as *prasad,* or food that has been offered to the Highest. In the Bhagavad-Gita it is spoken of as the "remnant of the sacrifice." The Master, however, did not permit the disciples to take food from one another's plates, for they were still struggling with their own lower habits, which would have affected the nature and vibration of the food that they touched.

Of course all this has to do with strict spiritual training, but it has made its impress on the whole of Hindu life. The Swami used often to demonstrate to his household the method by which perhaps hundreds of people in his native land would share a drinking-cup without ever letting it touch their lips. Throwing back his head, the Swami would pour the water into his open mouth with such dexterity that not a drop would be spilled. Thus we find that a sense of sanctity sometimes accomplishes the same end as does sanitation.

In the Occident if a worshipper had a flower in his hand that he was about to lay upon the altar, and that flower accidentally fell and touched his foot, he might wash it off, but the chances are that he would offer it according to his original plan. Not so with a Hindu devotee. Hindu tradition holds that nothing which touches the foot is fit to be offered to the Lord; only the purest, cleanest, finest can be

laid at His divine Feet. The human foot, by which man expresses his contempt and which is symbolic of the lowest, by its touch makes the offering unclean. There must be no stain or shadow of stain on that which is intended for the Highest. It must embody, so far as is possible, the unsullied adoration of the heart or it is not a genuine offering. Furthermore, the flower that is to be offered must never be smelled by the one who is about to offer it. If the devotee enjoys it first then it is only the leavings that he is giving to the Divine. Flowers that have been used in worship are never disposed of in the ordinary way. They are either burned or thrown where no one will ever tread upon them.

At the Centre these delicate feelings were carried out in relation to Temple duties, service to the Teacher or to one another, or in connection with household duties in the kitchen or dining-room where all food was prepared and served as a holy offering before the household partook of it.

Some inkling may be given of the reverence accorded holy men, elders and teachers by the fact that the feet of such are touched in reverence by the students and younger people, indicating that what is ordinarily regarded as lowest and least becomes especially sacred in relation to superiors. Thus the devotee in India bows down to the *Guru's* feet, or, as it is said, "takes the dust of his feet" in complete love, humility and surrender.

The senior Sister who had lived in close contact with one of Sri Ramakrishna's great disciples, Swami Ramakrishnananda, near Madras, used to correct the members of the Centre when on slipping off their shoes before seating themselves on the meditation rug at the time of the household Service, they would leave them pointing toward the shrine. She said that shoes must never be placed that way; and the Swami always noticed it if feet or legs were thrust out con-

spicuously toward the shrine, the Teacher, or any person or object worthy of deference.

Throughout India if a younger person's foot accidentally collides with the foot of an elder, instantly she stoops, touches the older person's foot, and with the same hand touches her own head and heart in a humble token of regret and apology. The same custom is observed if one should step upon, say, the *Guru's* prayer-rug. If a holy book is dropped upon the floor, in lifting it, it is placed for an instant against the forehead and over the heart. It is hard to describe the atmosphere of graciousness that this quick gesture, and others like it, impart.

Many a time, in later years, when there would be an afternoon of silence and meditation at the Cohasset Ashrama, which the Swami founded near Boston in the year 1929 the disciple was disturbed to see members from the outside, seated on the pine-needles, their legs stretched straight out in front of them and their feet all but reposing in the flower-bed surrounding the out-of-door altar. Of course they had not been trained along these lines, and the same lack of training would often cause them to fall asleep there, practically inside the Nature Sanctuary. The disciple had been guilty of far worse offences during her first days at the Centre, but she soon learned, among other things, that vigil, not slumber, should be the unvarying habit of every aspirant during contemplation of an ideal or when seated for that purpose in or near a shrine.

Each member of the Boston Centre had in her room her own little altar, always kept fresh and clean, with holy pictures and favorite holy books, vigil light and incense holder. Before this altar a meditation was supposed to be held or a prayer said before the eyes were closed in slumber. On awakening, the first thought, so the Swami taught, should

be of God, of the Teacher and of sacred things, for the whole tenor of the day would be affected by the initial consciousness.

Many of Occidental blood and birth may hold that the fine points of feeling and behaviour which have been indicated, are needless, silly, and bordering on the superstitious. Their value naturally will depend on the goal that is being sought. If it be name, fame or fortune, added sensibility may be a liability rather than an asset; if it be union with God or infinite Truth, one cannot be too fine or too receptive.

The average spiritual seeker should ever strive to keep the interior and the exterior in accord, for in this balance lies wholeness. As the *Katha Upanishad* teaches, "He who sees differences between visible and invisible goes from death to death." "He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be indivisibly one" sings the mystic poet Kabir, out of his direct vision. Outer cleanliness and outer graciousness are the externalization of an "inward spiritual grace" and an inward purity, and cannot be safely ignored by him who would be clean all the way through.

No doubt to the uneducated and the unlettered, surgical cleanliness often seems completely foolish. They do not realize that a hand may look clean and yet be laden with disease and death.

Through many years of specialized training based upon inward gazing, India has attained a knowledge transcending ours of the West as that of the scientist transcends that of the average layman. Thus we find in some of the *Yoga* treatises mention made of the *Tanmatras,* or subtle elements of matter. Of these Swami Vivekananda writes, "By the undefined is meant the very fine materials, the *Tanmatras,* which cannot be sensed by ordinary men. If you practise *Yoga,* however, says Patanjali, after a while your perceptions

become so fine that you will actually see the *Tanmatras*. . . . We are all throwing out these *Tanmatras*. . . . Every day of our lives we are throwing out a mass of good or evil, and everywhere we go the atmosphere is full of these materials."

It is with the idea of ridding the body of unclean, and of course invisible, *Tanmatras* which may have been picked up by the casual handling of things, that the devout or wise Hindu may even sometimes go to an excess in his ablutions, just as the Westerner often may go to an excess in seeking to protect himself from germs.

The *Tanmatras* are the scientific basis for the sense of sanctity and for the fragrant atmosphere which some people emanate and which was so apparent in Swami Paramananda. The pure and luminous *Tanmatras* are inherent in the body of the holy, flowing out from it as its subtler particles, just as the impure *Tanmatras* proceed from the body of the evil and unholy, and have to do with character quite as much as with physical cleanness or uncleanness. But it must be remembered that a character giving birth to purity and fragrance will inevitably find reflection in those physical and mental habits which are in harmony with those qualities and help to protect and maintain them.

A new-comer to the Centre often had her ears assailed by the command, "Wash your hands! You have just touched the floor so you must not handle that book (or that food, or whatever it might me) till you have washed them." At first this would be confusing and discouraging, sometimes irritating; but it was surprising how soon these ways became entirely normal and spontaneous and brought with them an awareness of subtler values and a sense of cleanliness never before experienced.

An amusing incident relative to the innate fragrance of the holy, or what is known as the "odor of sanctity," occurred

a year or two before the disciple entered the work. It was told of a young student, a youth, who became almost frantic in his devotion and on this account had a tendency to manifest an excess of zeal.

One day, during a period of house-cleaning, when banana oil was being freely used on the furniture, a visitor rang the door-bell. The young man opened the door to admit the caller who started to enter but paused on the threshold, sniffed the air and enquired, "What is this strange, sweet odor that I smell?" "Oh that," said our student ingenuously, his mind in the clouds and never thinking of the banana oil, "that is the odor of sanctity, emanating from the Swami. You see he is a very holy man."

As in all things, so in this type of training, the Swami desired his students to act from genuine feeling, not mechanically or just because they had been told this or that; for intelligent acts can become superstitious if their basis in reason or feeling is forgotten. Also always, always, he insisted, commonsense must stand on guard. Once the meaning of sanctity is grasped by the heart, however, the mind and body follow along quite naturally. An added sensitivity comes into the life and a new world of delicate feeling opens up before one.

TO BE CONTINUED

Whoever has known beauty, remembers it forever. Whoever has known happiness, will not believe that sorrow rules the world; whoever has loved, knows that that love is there in her heart, as in the hearts of others. . . . Sorrow in time grows dim, and loss grows gentle; but love is like a light that never dies. —*Robert Nathan*

Wisdom is only found in truth. —*Goethe*

A LETTER

Vedanta Centre
32 Fenway, Boston
February 1, 1936

Dear G.:

I cannot tell you how very deeply I felt about the way you have been received at the Ashrama. A. has written most beautifully and expressively about your first Sunday. May you be even more fully blessed, is my constant prayer.

You will read from the general letter about my present plans and I think you will agree with me that I am taking the wisest course at this time.

Now in regard to the unpleasant problems and incidents that have come to our notice. As you know, my attitude has always been to ignore them completely, but this present situation probably requires a little bit of hissing* on account of the safety of the children so I shall share with you the thoughts that have come to me. After reading them, take them up in your prayers and meditation before taking any action whatsoever.

I have thought of suggesting that Mrs. M. might have an interview with Mrs. J. and tell her frankly what has been attempted through R.'s friend and her mother. As Mrs. J. is financing all such things, she may realize the seriousness of the situation. My other idea was that you and Mrs. M. might go and interview the superintendent of the Junior College and give a hint so that the girls may be protected. A little word from high authority may stop this entirely. I am even now hesitating about writing such things because you know how contrary it is to my nature to do so.

*Referring to Sri Ramakrishna's parable of the snake who was advised to hiss and not strike.

However, because these thoughts flashed through my mind, I am repeating them to you. I hope you need do nothing and that the whole matter may be taken care of through a Higher Power.

Please . . . do not have any anxiety either for the girls or for the Ashrama. I feel more and more the brooding protection of the Great Power which has always shielded us, and I have said, again and again, "I draw the awful circle around the Ashrama." You remember how Richelieu pronounced these words when he put his circle around his ward to protect her from the tyranny of the king. I have often visualized the flaming trident of Siva as guarding the Ashrama and keeping it safe from all evil influences. Revive, my child, with your whole heart, Spiritual Force and everything else will be taken care of.

Please tell me how you like the "*Message of the East*" and write something for it if you can. . . . I am naturally absorbed in this work.

I hope you will guard your own health, that of the children and of all the others of the Ashrama.

With my abiding love and constant prayers for your safekeeping, I am,

Affectionately yours,
Paramananda

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASS.

Easter activities brought to a close Sister Daya's devoted services to the Vedanta Centre. She had poured into it such abundant warmth and vitality that the resident Community and friends were reluctant to see her go. She left with the memory of a happy and fruitful visit, eager to return in the near future.

On the following Sunday, April 24th, Srimati Gayatri Devi was at her post after a continental flight of only ten hours. En route from California she had paused in New York overnight to speak at the Unity Centre of Practical Christianity. The earnest group, under the leadership of Mrs. Georgiana Tree West, responded with great sincerity to Gayatri Devi's address on "Healing in Meditation." Mrs. West's absence from the city was ably filled by Mrs. Helen Zagat's warm and welcome spirit.

Lord Buddha's birthday was the first festival of spring, held on Thursday, May 12th. It was a beautiful evening within the Centre's Chapel, scented with lilac and white with dogwood. Once again Buddha's message of compassion, tolerance and non-injury was brought home in a Service relating his life-story of struggle, renunciation and final achievement.

The evening of June 19th will be remembered by those who heard Professor Narayan Agarwal of India speak on "Mahatma Gandhi." This Hindu gentleman greatly impressed everyone by his lucid interpretation of Gandhi's life and especially by the mark he himself bore of Mahatma's transforming influence. The meeting was arranged by the Centre in conjunction with the resident Indian students group. After Professor Agarwal's address he answered many questions regarding India's problems and present state of affairs. The members and the friends of the Vedanta Centre felt a glowing pride as the speaker expressed his appreciation by stating that on his round-the-world trip he had spoken at various universities and addressed large gatherings but nowhere had he found the matchless atmosphere of peace and harmony which surrounded him that evening.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, COHASSET, MASS.

Long before Memorial Day, when the little Ashrama held

its first Service publicly, it had become the scene of many activities. The Vedanta Centre Household traveled between Boston and Cohasset frequently, preparing the place for the summer and coming together in worship. The warm Spring lent its share to make the Ashrama, with its song birds, pine-scented breeze and profusion of flowers, a true paradise.

Saturday, June 18th, proved most inspiring. It was set aside to commemorate Swami Paramananda's liberation. On this sultry summer day a group from Boston and vicinity joined the Community in the morning, spending many hours absorbing the cool peace of the Ashrama. An hour's Silence was observed at noon, ending with the reading of the Swami's poems. This was followed by an informal dinner enjoyed under the big pine tree by the Lower House. The special Service was held in the Nature Sanctuary at 4:30. Gayatri Devi spoke spontaneously, reminding each one of the Ideal to which the Swami had dedicated his work, arousing in all a stronger sense of responsibility as to the charge entrusted to their care.

At the writing of this report plans were in progress for the Fourth of July observance in remembrance of Swami Vivekananda. The customary program of three hours' Silence will attract earnest seekers, including out-of-town friends who never fail to share in this day's activities.

The Guest Cottage welcomes everyone and especially the devoted friends from other states who are paying their yearly visit to Boston and Cohasset in order to spend their vacation and to partake of the spiritual refreshment the life at the Ashrama offers.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

Among all the special events Easter remains one of the most memorable at this hilltop Retreat of California. An

air of eager preparation and glad expectancy pervades the preceding days and finally culminates in the early Sunrise Service bringing together numberless worshippers from all directions. This year the day was perfect from the standpoint of weather and the observance reached its climax at the eleven o'clock Service held before an audience overflowing the Temple. The enthusiasm remained unabated through all the activities — breakfast and luncheon at the Guest House to large groups and the final Service in the afternoon. Srimati Gayatri Devi, who had not been to the Ashrama for Easter for thirteen years, officiated at all Services, marvelling at the miracle of magnetism by which Ananda Ashrama carries on its work vibrantly throughout the year.

To the eyes of Sister Daya, on her arrival April 21st, California, newly emerged from her winter chastening of snow and cold, shone green as an emerald, with flowers fairly tumbling into bloom. Ashrama Anniversary was observed this year on May 15th. The atmosphere was vibrant as of old and many hearts brought birthday wishes. The preceding Thursday, May 12th, instead of the Thursday night Class, a special Service was held honoring the Birthday of Lord Buddha. The night was flooded with moonlight, and as always the message of the Blessed One struck the note of wisdom and sublime renunciation.

On Memorial Day, Silence was observed throughout the afternoon. The Temple remained open, sharing with the faithful ones its blessing of peace.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

On June 5th Sister Daya was the guest speaker at the New Century Foundation, an association to bring about better understanding and tolerance among various groups. The Sister shared the honors at this Baccalaureate of Faiths with three learned representatives of differing religions.